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NSC DRAFTING

21 July 1959

IRAQ

- I. The tensions in Iraq between Communist and non-Communist elements appear to be still growing with recent violence in northeastern town of Kirkuk a symptom.
  - A. Not a Communist revolt as claimed by Cairo's propaganda media, but Communist elements may well have supplied the spark which set the fighting off.
    1. Cairo's reports echoed widely in our own press because of the absence of fuller statements from Iraqi authorities.
  - B. What happened last week in Kirkuk--the incidents began on 14 July and went on through the 17th--was the result of mixing an explosive compound: political excitement plus communal tensions between Kurds and Turkomans plus a local army and security force which had been strongly infiltrated with Communist elements and which shared the communal antipathies of the populace.
- II. Qasim's reaction to Kirkuk incidents has been vigorous on a local level, but no general move against the Communists has been indicated yet.
  - A. Troops were moved promptly to restore order.
  - B. Arms have been taken up from a number of Popular Resistance Force units whose commanders are now suspect. In Kirkuk, all Popular Resistance Force members have been stripped of arms, ammunition, and even identity cards.

- C. The current class of reserve army officers, which includes many pro-Communists and which apparently was a factor in the Kirkuk affair, where units had high proportion of reservists, has been ordered discharged.
  - D. In a speech on 19 July, Qasim condemned both the communal sectarianism surfaced in the Kirkuk rioting and the instigators, whom he promised to punish severely. He again warned the Communists (implicitly--he never mentions them or any other group by name) that the government alone is the protector of the people from plotters.
- III. Although the Kirkuk affair apparently has been successfully suppressed, the atmosphere in Baghdad remains one of apprehension that new violence, possibly even a Communist coup attempt, may take place.
- A. Foreign delegations which attended the 14 July celebrations are reported in a WAR message to be making plans to leave the city quickly.
  - B. If the Communists, whether deliberately or inadvertently, continue to appear aggressive, Qasim may be forced to move more directly against them than he has seemed to wish to do.
  - C. If Qasim does not use a firmer hand generally, he might be faced with a breakdown of public order on a wide scale.
    1. Incidents in southern Iraqi towns still occurring almost daily.
- IV. Soviet leaders, undoubtedly concerned with current difficulties of Iraqi Communists, are placing major emphasis on efforts to show Qasim that USSR is "Iraq's best friend."

- A. Khrushchev has invited Qasim to visit USSR.
- B. Grometsov--Soviet deputy foreign minister who headed Soviet delegation to Iraqi national day celebrations--saw Qasim twice during visit <sup>and</sup> at 21 July press conference announced gift of laboratory (valued at \$37,500) for secondary school.
- C. Radio Moscow's worldwide propaganda coverage of Iraqi celebrations favorable and extremely heavy--over 100 radio commentaries.

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